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For more information:
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Motorists to use caution and share the road with farm equipment during planting

Many farmers throughout the state will begin planting soon and the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) is urging motorists to use caution as large farm equipment is out on the roadways this time of year. With flooding in several areas of the state, many farmers will be using alternate routes and state highways to access their fields.

“Motorists should be extremely cautious as they drive, especially on rural, two-lane roads, as slow moving farm equipment is out on the roadways,” says Mark Nelson, NDDOT Safety Division Director. “Many crashes are due to inattention, speeding and unsafe passing. When approaching farm equipment, motorists need to pay attention, slow down, be patient and pass with extreme caution.”

Farm equipment is very large and heavy making it extremely difficult for operators to accelerate, slow down and stop. These vehicles also have large blind spots, making it difficult for operators to see approaching vehicles. Tractors and other farm equipment may be wider than they look from behind and may require ample space in both lanes.

In 2010, there were 46 crashes in North Dakota involving farm equipment, resulting in two fatalities. “By taking extra precautions on the roadway and safely sharing the road with farm equipment, crashes can be prevented,” stresses Nelson.

Motorists are reminded to:

- Watch for mud and debris on the roadway as trucks go directly from the field onto the highway.
- Be aware that you can encounter farm equipment at any time of day.
- Drive with headlights on at all times.
- Wear seatbelts.

In addition, farmers should be aware of road construction projects and any load restrictions that may still be in place. Some roads may be inaccessible to large farm equipment.

Farm equipment operators should consider the following precautions:

- Use lights and flashers to make equipment more visible.
- Use slow moving emblems on equipment traveling 25 mph or less.
- Consider using a rear pilot vehicle when moving equipment, especially at night.

For the most current progress on construction projects call 511 or go to the Travel Information Map on the NDDOT website at www.dot.nd.gov.

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